Not getting anywhere with your applications? Had an interview and not been successful? Survived an assessment centre but not been selected for final interview?

Remember, nobody likes to be rejected and it is not unusual to feel angry, disappointed and de-motivated but don’t panic – if you remain positive and don’t take it personally, you can turn your rejection into a useful experience. By investing a little bit of time and effort you can make sure your next application, assessment centre or interview will give you a better chance of getting that much sought after job.

If you are not being invited to interviews:

It may sound obvious, but make sure you are applying for the right jobs – do your skills and qualifications really match those required by the job description or advert? Be honest with yourself. You might like to talk through your career direction and job search with an consultant.

Does your CV or application form ‘sell’ yourself effectively enough to prospective employers? Is it focussed towards the field of work, the employer and the position advertised? Have your CV checked over by an consultant to make sure you are presenting yourself in a way that will appeal to employers. Even small changes to a CV or application form can make a huge difference.

Make sure you focus on your skills when filling out a CV or application form – employers want to see very clearly that you have the skills required to do the job. Provide specific evidence to demonstrate that you match the required skills, qualifications and experience.

If you have an interview but are unsuccessful:

While the memory is still strong, write down some notes about what went wrong and what went well – were there any particular questions you found difficult to answer? Did you find it difficult to relax? Did your nerves affect your performance?

Ask the employer for feedback. It may not seem like it at the time but it is beneficial to know why you were rejected so you can learn from the experience and improve your performance for next time. Phone the employer as soon as you hear their decision and listen to the positive as well as the negative points made.

Reflect on how well you answered the questions – did you provide full answers, with specific examples to illustrate how you have developed the skills the employer is asking for? Think about how you can improve for your next interview.

Discuss the interview and the employers’ feedback with an consultant. Preparation is key so before your next interview, why not arrange a mock interview and use our information room resources listed at the end of this leaflet.
If you have attended an assessment centre but struggle to get through to the next stage:

Reflect on the experience and try to establish which elements you found hardest or where you didn’t perform very well. Practice, practice, practice!

- If you were very nervous while delivering a presentation you could practice in front of family and friends
- If you struggle with numerical or verbal reasoning tests then do some practice ones! The library has a number of books both hard copy and ebooks that are available. The Careers and Employability Service also offers an online test that can be found via the portal or our VLE page.
- Assessment Centres often include a group exercise – these are obviously a bit difficult to practice on your own, however you can watch the Video ‘At the assessment centre’ online via the Careers and Employability Service VLE page, which highlights the ‘do’s and don’ts’ of participating in a group exercise.

For more help

The Careers and Employability Service purchase a number of books related to various degree topics, please search the library catalogue classmark ‘The Careers and Employability Service’.

We offer a 15 minute booked appointments which offers you the chance to speak to an consultant about your plans and ideas. To book visit: stir.ac.uk/careers/students/advice/

Other information leaflets
- Assessment centres
- CVs and application forms
- Interview technique
- Getting the most our of careers fairs
- Networking
- Using social media

Videos available via Canvas
- Journey to work
- Making an impact
- Your jobs online
- The assessment centre video
- Big opportunities in small business
- Graduates in SMEs

Contact information
Careers and Employability Service
Got an enquiry? Visit the Student Services Hub
Telephone: 01786 46022
Email: careers@stir.ac.uk
stir.ac.uk/careers

This publication can be made available in different formats. Please contact the Careers and Employability Service for further information: careers@stir.ac.uk

Updated August 17 All URLs are provided in good faith.